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| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|---|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 10/686,480 | 10/16/2003 | Katsunori Nishimura | 520.43216X00 | 8057 |
| 20457 | 7590 | 11/20/2006 | EXAMINER | |
| ANTONELLI, TERRY, STOUT & KRAUS, LLP 1300 NORTH SEVENTEENTH STREET SUITE 1800 ARLINGTON, VA 22209-3873 | | | | CHUO, TONY SHENG HSIANG |
| ART UNIT | | PAPER NUMBER | | |
| | | 1745 | | |

DATE MAILED: 11/20/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

| | | |
|---|------------------------|---------------------|
| Advisory Action Before the Filing of an Appeal Brief | Application No. | Applicant(s) |
| | 10/686,480 | NISHIMURA ET AL. |
| | Examiner | Art Unit |
| | Tony Chuo | 1745 |

--The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

THE REPLY FILED 03 November 2006 FAILS TO PLACE THIS APPLICATION IN CONDITION FOR ALLOWANCE.

1. The reply was filed after a final rejection, but prior to or on the same day as filing a Notice of Appeal. To avoid abandonment of this application, applicant must timely file one of the following replies: (1) an amendment, affidavit, or other evidence, which places the application in condition for allowance; (2) a Notice of Appeal (with appeal fee) in compliance with 37 CFR 41.31; or (3) a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) in compliance with 37 CFR 1.114. The reply must be filed within one of the following time periods:

- a) The period for reply expires 3 months from the mailing date of the final rejection.
 b) The period for reply expires on: (1) the mailing date of this Advisory Action, or (2) the date set forth in the final rejection, whichever is later. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of the final rejection.

Examiner Note: If box 1 is checked, check either box (a) or (b). ONLY CHECK BOX (b) WHEN THE FIRST REPLY WAS FILED WITHIN TWO MONTHS OF THE FINAL REJECTION. See MPEP 706.07(f).

Extensions of time may be obtained under 37 CFR 1.136(a). The date on which the petition under 37 CFR 1.136(a) and the appropriate extension fee have been filed is the date for purposes of determining the period of extension and the corresponding amount of the fee. The appropriate extension fee under 37 CFR 1.17(a) is calculated from: (1) the expiration date of the shortened statutory period for reply originally set in the final Office action; or (2) as set forth in (b) above, if checked. Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of the final rejection, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

NOTICE OF APPEAL

2. The Notice of Appeal was filed on _____. A brief in compliance with 37 CFR 41.37 must be filed within two months of the date of filing the Notice of Appeal (37 CFR 41.37(a)), or any extension thereof (37 CFR 41.37(e)), to avoid dismissal of the appeal. Since a Notice of Appeal has been filed, any reply must be filed within the time period set forth in 37 CFR 41.37(a).

AMENDMENTS

3. The proposed amendment(s) filed after a final rejection, but prior to the date of filing a brief, will not be entered because
 (a) They raise new issues that would require further consideration and/or search (see NOTE below);
 (b) They raise the issue of new matter (see NOTE below);
 (c) They are not deemed to place the application in better form for appeal by materially reducing or simplifying the issues for appeal; and/or
 (d) They present additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims.

NOTE: See next page. (See 37 CFR 1.116 and 41.33(a)).

4. The amendments are not in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121. See attached Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment (PTOL-324).

5. Applicant's reply has overcome the following rejection(s): _____.

6. Newly proposed or amended claim(s) _____ would be allowable if submitted in a separate, timely filed amendment canceling the non-allowable claim(s).

7. For purposes of appeal, the proposed amendment(s): a) will not be entered, or b) will be entered and an explanation of how the new or amended claims would be rejected is provided below or appended.

The status of the claim(s) is (or will be) as follows:

Claim(s) allowed: _____.

Claim(s) objected to: _____.

Claim(s) rejected: 2-13 and 16-23.

Claim(s) withdrawn from consideration: _____.

AFFIDAVIT OR OTHER EVIDENCE

8. The affidavit or other evidence filed after a final action, but before or on the date of filing a Notice of Appeal will not be entered because applicant failed to provide a showing of good and sufficient reasons why the affidavit or other evidence is necessary and was not earlier presented. See 37 CFR 1.116(e).

9. The affidavit or other evidence filed after the date of filing a Notice of Appeal, but prior to the date of filing a brief, will not be entered because the affidavit or other evidence failed to overcome all rejections under appeal and/or appellant fails to provide a showing of good and sufficient reasons why it is necessary and was not earlier presented. See 37 CFR 41.33(d)(1).

10. The affidavit or other evidence is entered. An explanation of the status of the claims after entry is below or attached.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION/OTHER

11. The request for reconsideration has been considered but does NOT place the application in condition for allowance because: _____.

12. Note the attached Information Disclosure Statement(s). (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s). _____.

13. Other: _____.

Response to Arguments

1. The applicant argues that the office action mailed on August 3, 2006 included a new basis for rejection of claim 17. This 112 rejection for lack of antecedent basis for claim 17 is not substantive so therefore, the rejection is withdrawn. The applicant also argues that claim 12 amended on June 14, 2006 did not necessitate a new prior art rejection. The amendment added a new limitation of a thickness of 50 to 300 μm which changed the scope of the claim. Therefore, the amendment on June 14, 2006 did necessitate a new ground of rejection for claim 12. The finality of the office action mailed on August 3, 2006 is maintained.

In response to applicant's argument that Nakao et al is nonanalogous art, it has been held that a prior art reference must either be in the field of applicant's endeavor or, if not, then be reasonably pertinent to the particular problem with which the applicant was concerned, in order to be relied upon as a basis for rejection of the claimed invention. See *In re Oetiker*, 977 F.2d 1443, 24 USPQ2d 1443 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, Nakao et al is pertinent to the particular problem with which the applicant was concerned because the reference discloses using the membrane for the production of a moisture controlled gas which solves the same problem of controlling the humidity of the fuel/oxidizing gasses. In addition, it is noted that a recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. The Nakao membrane is capable of performing the intended use, so therefore it meets the claim limitation of a water retaining layer including the dimensions thereof.

The limitation of "water is retained by capillary force by water retaining layer when the at least one unit fuel cell is not working and is taken by the at least one of the oxidizing gas and the fuel gas against the capillary force when the at least one unit fuel cell is working" changes the scope of the claims. Therefore, this amendment would require further search and consideration.



SUSY TSANG-FOSTER
PRIMARY EXAMINER